

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, NL

SUBJ: OPPOSITION LIBERALS STILL ON WINNING STREAK

REF: THE HAGUE 4620

1. SUMMARY: OPPOSITION LIBERAL PARTY'S WINNING STREAK CONTINUES. IN NOV 21 MUNICIPAL ELECTION IN AMERSFOORT (SECOND IMPORTANT ELECTION SINCE SECOND CHAMBER ELECTIONS OF NOVEMBER 1972), OPPOSITION LIBERALS INCREASED PERCENTAGE OF VOTES BY 6 PERCENT. LABOR PARTY LOST 2 PERCENT OF ITS SUPPORT AND COMBINED CONFESSIONAL PARTIES LOST ALMOST 4 PERCENT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN AMERSFOORT NOV 21, THE OPPOSITION LIBERAL PARTY (VVD) GAINED BY 6 PERCENT. LABOR PARTY DECLINED BY 2 PERCENT AND D-66 AND RADICALS ALSO LOST. THE THREE CONFESSIONAL PARTIES (KVP, ARP AND CHU) RUNNING ON COMINED SLATE, LOST 3.5 PERCENT. TWO SMALL LOCAL PARTIES GAINED; DS'70 DID NOT PARTICIPATE.

3. LIBERAL PARTY FLOOR LEADER HANS WIEGEL MAINTAINED HIS PARTY'S SIGNIFICANT VICTORY INDICATED LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT. HE ASCRIBED LOSSES OF CONFESSIONAL PARTIES TO THEIR COOPERATION IN THE CURRENT COALITION AND WARNED THEY WERE BETTER ADVISED TO RENEW COOPERATION WITH LIBERALS. STATE UNCLASSIFIED

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SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, MARCEL VAN DAM, NETHERLAND'S MOST

PRESTIGIOUS POLITICAL FORECASTER, AGREED THAT AMERSFOORT LIKE ZAASTAD (REFTEL) WAS NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE CONSTITUENCY AND THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS INDICATED A NATIONAL TREND IN FAVOR THE LIBERALS. VAN DAM POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE VVD HAD PROFITTED FROM THE NON-PARTICIPATION OF DS'70 IN THE ELECTIONS AND POOR VOTER TURNOUT (68 PERCENT VERSUS 84 PERCENT IN NOV 72). CONFESSIONAL FLOOR LEADERS ANDRIESSEN (KVP) AND AANTJES (ARP) DID NOT MINIMIZE THEIR LOSSES BUT NOTED THAT THE PARTICIPATION OF TWO SMALL RIGHT WING PARTIES, WHICH HAD GARNERED 6 PERCENT OF THE VOTES BY STRESSING LOCAL ISSUES, CUT INTO THEIR STRENGTH. THEY ALSO NOTED COMPARED TO THE RESULTS OF THE NOVEMBER 1972 CHAMBER ELECTIONS, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAD NOT DONE THAT BADLY.

4. COMMENT: AMERSFOORT RESULTS, LIKE THOSE OF ZAASTAD IN OCTOBER, INDICATE THE VVD IS STILL ON WINNING STREAK. PARADOXICALLY, VVD VICTORY COULD STRENGTHEN CURRENT COALITION. LABOR PARTY, SENSING SOME LOSS OF NATIONAL CONFIDENCE, WILL BE UNLIKELY TAKE TOO HARD A LINE WITH CONFESSIONAL COALITION PARTNERS. CONFESSIONAL PARTIES (KVP, ARP) WHO FEAR NEW ELECTIONS, WILL CONTINUE UNWILLING TO DO ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT PRECIPITATE THESE ELCTIONS AND FORCE THEM TO RENEW COOPERATION WITH LIBERALS IN A COALITION IN WHICH THEY WOULD NOW CLEARLY BE THE JUNIOR PARTNERS.
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